

Canaan Valley

National Wildlife Refuge

Fact Sheet

Represented by the following Members of Congress:

Senator Robert C. Byrd (D)
Senator John D. Rockefeller IV (D)
Rep. Alan B. Mollohan (D-1st)

Contact

Stan Skutnek, Refuge Manager
Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge
HC 70, Box 200
Davis, WV 26260
Phone: 304/866 3858
Fax: 304/866 3852
TDD: 800/982 8771
E-mail: stan_skutnek@fws.gov

Purpose

The Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge was established to preserve the unique plant and wildlife communities of the nationally significant Blackwater River wetlands. The refuge was also created to perpetuate wildlife species, including migratory birds and threatened and endangered species, protected by federal law.

Public Use Notes

- Visitor center
- Nature trails for wildlife observation, nature photography, environmental education and interpretation
- Hunting (subject to state and refuge regulations)
- Fishing

Management Activities

- Protect fragile wetland plant communities and control accelerated erosion on uplands.
- Protect habitats of threatened and endangered species

- Perpetuate nesting habitat for grassland-dependent migratory birds
- Maintain early successional habitat for songbirds and American woodcock

Highlights

The refuge contains a wetlands complex of more than 5,171 acres that has national significance.

The valley has one of the largest shrub swamps and the fourth largest bog in the eastern United States.

The climate supports a relict boreal ecosystem that includes at least 580 species of plants, 109 of which are representative of latitudes in Maine.

Canaan Valley is a regionally significant breeding ground for woodcock and snipe.

The refuge supports populations of the threatened Cheat Mountain salamander and the endangered West Virginia northern flying squirrel. In 2003 refuge staff confirmed the presence of West Virginia northern flying squirrel and will continue to survey to define its distribution.

More than 280 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish are known or expected to occur in the diverse habitats of the Canaan Valley.

Forty-one miles of trails were opened to public uses, including 31 miles for pedestrians, 22 miles for horseback riders, 23 miles for bicyclists and 7 miles for motorized vehicles. An additional 10 miles of trails are available for cross-country skiing on the refuge.



Issues

There is no comprehensive survey of the recently acquired 12,000 acres to mark the refuge boundary; however, a first step in that direction has been accomplished. Aerial photography using LIDAR imagery was completed and information will now be available to provide accurate delineation of the refuge boundary. Also, high-definition information on hydrology, plant cover, contours and other physical features is now available.

Unauthorized wheeled vehicle use on the refuge continues to damage fragile wetland resources, accelerate erosion and contribute to the vandalism of refuge property.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

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1 800/344 WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>
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